

N.C. Plant and Animal Species Fact Sheets



Cannonball jellyfish (*Stomolophus meleagris*)

Introduction

The Cannonball is also known as the Cabbage Head and is very common in salty estuaries. Jellyfish are not true fish; they are primitive marine life without a backbone which we call invertebrates. They live their lives floating with the currents with only a little control in where they go.

What do they look like?

The Cannonball's body is milky-white and firm with a brownish band around the edge forming an umbrella shape. The body is translucent. The lower part is a hard stalk with short arms.

How big are they?

They can be up to 8 inches (20cm) in diameter.

Where do they live?

They are inhabitants of the open ocean and estuaries behind barrier islands. Typically, during the summer months large numbers of jellyfish are seen along the shoreline.

Who eats them?

Ocean sunfish and sea turtles are predators of jellyfish. In some areas of the world they

are made into paste and flour and eaten in that form.

What do they eat?

Cannonballs have no tentacles so they join their arms and using a grist like structure to force microscopic and small organisms through their mouth into a central cavity that acts like a stomach. The waste products are expelled through the same opening.

How do they mate?

Jellyfish develop through stages and during the medusa stage they reproduce sexually. They also have a polyp stage that reproduces in an asexual manner with a form of budding off.

What are the young like?

Their growth is through stages which have different forms eventually producing the adult stage that is most familiar to us.

People Interactions

This jellyfish is usually reported as a non stinging species, because it has a very weak venom. This species can often be found clogging fishermen's trawl nets.

EstuaryLive

www.EstuaryLive.org

North Carolina National Estuarine Research Reserve

www.ncnerr.org or tel. 252.728.2170

Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Program

<http://www.apnep.org/> or tel. 252.946.6481

Carolina Estuarine Reserve Foundation

www.cerf.us

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